

# AccessLetter

**Cambridge Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities**

## **Bridges to Success: Strengthening Transitions to Adult Services**



School districts in Massachusetts have long been required to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for each student with a disability, to ensure they receive a free and appropriate public education,

along with appropriate support services, in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs. But when a student with a disability graduates from high school or turns 22, school districts around the Commonwealth have not always ensured a proper transition to adult human services.

In the wake of recent court decisions, school districts are working harder to ensure that students with disabilities receive the essential special education transition planning and services required by federal and state law.

State Representative Tom Sannicandro recently filed a bill on Beacon Hill to strengthen the integration of the special education IEP process and Chapter 688 Individual Transition Plan (ITP) process.

The bill, entitled “Bridges to Success -- An Act to Support the Transition to Adult Services for Persons with Disabilities,” requires timely notice to and mandatory attendance by a representative of a participating adult services agency to attend at least one IEP meeting two years before the student is anticipated to graduate or turn 22.

**(More on Transitions, page 2)**

## **Disabilities Commission Seeks New Members**

Cambridge City Manager Robert W. Healy is seeking persons interested in serving on the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) advisory board. Made up of 11 Members who serve three-year terms in a volunteer capacity, the CCPD board meets on the second Thursday of every month at 5:30 PM.

CCPD seeks to build a membership that reflects the cultural and racial diversity of the city, is cross-disability in nature and representative of the different geographical areas of the community. Members must be current residents of Cambridge.

Together we work to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life for individuals with disabilities, and strives to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory.



CCPD Members are expected to work with other Members and CCPD staff to fulfill the goals and objectives of the CCPD Ordinance (CMC Chapter 2.96).

Members of CCPD are expected to attend monthly meetings, participate in subcommittees, and work on various short and/or long-term projects, as needed.

**(More on CCPD Vacancies, page 2)**

## Transitions (cont. from page 1)

School districts will also need to provide the student and participating agency with a summary of student academic achievement and functional performance which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the student's postsecondary goals.

Additionally, the legislation requires changes to the Commonwealth's Turning 22 law by updating and expanding the types of habilitative services provided under the 688 process to include: independent living skills, training in self-advocacy, and preparation for integrated competitive employment. Under the current definition of disability in the law, many students with disabilities who would benefit from 688 transition services are excluded because they are not eligible under the current standard.

For some students, very time limited service coordination for the purpose of accessing community supports is all that is needed. For other young people, the failure to receive appropriate transition services has potentially devastating life-long implications. Investing in youth with disabilities now will lead to long term benefits as more persons in the

Commonwealth move on to higher education and integrated competitive employment. Finally, the bill will assign to EOHHS the obligation to monitor and collect data on the extent to which needed Chapter 688 services are not being provided.

*Source: Disability Law Center*

## CCPD Vacancies (cont. from page 1)

For more information, contact Michael Muehe, Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 617-349-4692 (voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or <mmuehe@cambridgema.gov>. Interested persons should submit a letter by **Friday, March 12, 2011** describing their relevant experience and the kinds of disability-related issues or projects that interest them (along with a resume if possible) to:

**Robert W. Healy, City Manager**  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Fax: 617-349-4307  
E-mail: <citymanager@cambridgema.gov>

## Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (See end of Calendar for all weekly/recurring events)

- Feb. 2      **HIV Today: Improving Access to Housing for HIV Positive Individuals** – Presented by the AIDS Action Committee (AAC) and the Cambridge YWCA, HIV Today is an empowerment through learning program, and sessions, which include lunch, are provided at no cost to participants. In this session, participants will learn what is needed to prepare for a housing search and will be provided with an overview of the different types of affordable housing programs. There will also be a discussion about the barriers that HIV positive individuals may encounter when applying for housing and tips for overcoming them. The session will be held from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple Street. For more information, or to register, contact Christine Jones at 617-450-1241 or by email at <cjones@aac.org>.
- Feb. 5      **FREE Accessible Winter Recreation Festival** – Offered from 11am to 3pm at Dunn State Park in Gardner by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program, this will be a fun-filled day of adaptive outdoor recreation and activities for people with disabilities, their families and friends. Activities will include ice skating, kick sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobile rides, and sled hockey. There will also be a campfire, indoor warming area and refreshments. For more information or to register, call Gigi at 617-626-1294 or see <www.mass.gov/dcr/universal\_access/a\_events.htm>. To confirm program status on day of program (if weather is concern) call 413-545-5758. Dunn State Park is located at 289 Pearl Street in Gardner, MA.

- Feb. 8      **Adaptive Skating: Games on Ice!** – Offered by the Department of Recreation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this is an opportunity try out your wheelchair, an ice sled, or conventional skates on the ice! The Cronin Skating Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway, Revere will be reserved for adaptive skating from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Spin, slide, race, slalom, socialize and play gently competitive games with others. Ice sleds will be available for sled hockey and agility games. For more information, or to register, call 413-527-8980 or email <Heidi.Marie-Peterson@state.ma.us>.
- Feb. 10      **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Feb.12      **FREE Training for Parents and Youth on Special Education Transition Services for Children with Disabilities Ages 14-22 (presented in English and Chinese)** – Offered by the Disability Law Center, this free training will be held from 9:30am to 3:30pm at the Metropolitan Community Room, 38 Oak Street, Boston. The training will be conducted in both English and Chinese, and includes lunch. Although free, pre-registration is required. Please see <www.dlc-ma.org>, email <mail@dlc-ma.org>, or call 1-800-872-9992 (voice) or 1-800-381-0577 (TTY) for more information or to register.
- Feb.12      **Visually Impaired and Blind User Group (VIBUG)** – Members of VIBUG, which is a group serving blind and visually impaired computer users, are meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at MIT, 77 Mass Ave, Building 5, Room 134 in Cambridge. Annual membership is \$20. For more information, call 617-383-9560, email <president@vibug.org>, or see <www.vibug.org>.
- Feb. 13      **FREE Summer Camp and Recreation Expo for Children with Special Needs** – Sponsored by the Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council (F-SEPAC), this FREE expo is an opportunity for parents to learn about summer camps and recreational organizations in Massachusetts and the surrounding area. There will be an opportunity to speak directly with representatives, pick up literature and discover what's out there for your child. Food and activities for children will be provided. The expo will be held from 12pm to 3pm at the Framingham High School, 115 A Street. Go to <www.f-sepac.org> or email <campexpo@f-sepac.org> for more information.
- Feb. 16      **FREE Apartment Search Workshop** – Designed for tenants who have a rental subsidy or who are able to afford market-rate rents, this free workshop is being offered by the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP). Participants will learn how to search for an apartment, tips for contacting property owners, information about tenants' rights under the Fair Housing laws, and more. The workshop will be held from 10:00am to 11:30am at MBHP, 125 Lincoln Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston (near South Station). Space is limited and pre-registration is advised. For more information, or to register, contact Valerie Puleo at 617-425-6641 or <workshops@mbhp.org>.
- Feb. 20      **Music for Autism presents: *Classical Tangent*, a FREE Autism-Friendly Concert in Andover** – Music for Autism is a non-profit organization that raises public awareness and enriches lives through autism-friendly, interactive concerts developed specifically for individuals with autism and their families. The concerts, held in the United States and the United Kingdom, feature professional musicians, including Tony Award winners and Grammy-nominated classical artists. To ensure equal access for all, each Music for Autism concert is fully subsidized. Families note that the concerts fill a major psychosocial void, enabling them to enjoy enriching activities that are inclusive of children with autism. This concert, which is presented in partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will be held at 3 pm at MelMark New England, 461 River Road, Andover, MA 01810. Although free, pre-registration is required and must be done online at

<[www.musicforautism.org/](http://www.musicforautism.org/)>, where more information can be found. For directions to the venue, see <[www.melmarkne.org/](http://www.melmarkne.org/)> or call 978-654-4300.

- Mar.10      **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30 pm – 7 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <[kthurman@cambridgema.gov](mailto:kthurman@cambridgema.gov)> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Mar.11      **FREE Workshop in Cambridge: Basic Rights in Special Education** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop will provide families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law, and No Child Left Behind. Parents will learn how to be effective partners with their child's school to determine eligibility for special education, and to plan, make decisions and monitor their child's progress. The workshop will be held from 8:30am to 10:30am in the Family Center at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy, 225 Windsor Street in Cambridge. Pre-registration is required and can be done online at <[www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php](http://www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php)> or by phone at 617-236-7210.
- Mar.12      **Visions of Community Conference: Informing, Educating, & Empowering Families and the Professionals Who Serve Them** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) and several co-sponsors, this conference will feature keynote speakers Marianne Leone, actor, screenwriter and author of *Knowing Jesse – A Mother's Story of Grief, Grace, and Everyday Bliss*, and Dr. Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There will also be dozens of break-out sessions (many presented and/or translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Cantonese) with topical strands and information covering Early Childhood, Special Education, No Child Left Behind, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Health Care for Children with Special Needs, Transition, Social/Recreation Opportunities and more. Participants will have the opportunity to network with other parents and families and pick up free resources from more than 60 vendors. The conference will be held at the Seaport/World Trade Center in Boston, from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm. Pre-registration is required and costs \$75 through February 11 and \$90 thereafter; however, there are a limited number of partial scholarships. For scholarship information, leave a message at 617-236-7210, x198 or email <[voc2011@fcsn.org](mailto:voc2011@fcsn.org)>. For more information or to register, see <[www.fcsn.org/conferences/voc2011.php](http://www.fcsn.org/conferences/voc2011.php)> or call 1-800-331-0688.
- Mar.14      **Understanding Asperger Syndrome: Interventions and Strategies for Parents** – Offered by the Asperger's Association of New England (AANE), this workshop, designed for families of newly diagnosed children, describes in detail and through real-life examples, some of the most common characteristics of AS. It also includes basic information about behavioral issues, parenting strategies, disclosure and school concerns. It offers "first step" help for parents as they begin their journey as parents of a wonderfully quirky, socially awkward, sometimes precocious, often challenging child with AS. This workshop will be held from 7:00 to 9:30 pm at AANE, 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. Cost is \$35 for members, \$45 for non-members. For more information or to register, call 617-393-3824 or see <[www.aane.org](http://www.aane.org)>.
- Mar.28      **FREE Workshop in Somerville: Understanding My Child's Learning Style** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop will delve into different learning styles and show how they can be understood and harnessed to achieve success in many different environments, including the classroom. The workshop will be held from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the Kennedy Elementary School, 5 Cherry Street, Somerville. Pre-registration is required and can be done online at <[www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php](http://www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php)> or by phone at 617-236-7210.

## Weekly & Recurring Events

### Ongoing by Appointment

**Injured Worker Support Meetings** – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room. Volunteers provide resources and support. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617-247-6827, or go to <[www.rsiaction.org](http://www.rsiaction.org)>.

### Mondays

**NAMI Connection** – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Community, 153 South St, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617-863-5388 or <[tanj@vinfen.org](mailto:tanj@vinfen.org)>.

### Tuesdays

**Boston Voice Users** – this group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software meets from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <[www.bostonvoiceusers.org](http://www.bostonvoiceusers.org)>.

### Wednesdays

**Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT)** meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY or email <[aact@ctps.org](mailto:aact@ctps.org)> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

**DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 - 9 p.m. at McLean Hospital in Belmont (de Marneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617-855-2795 or see <[www.dbsaboston.org](http://www.dbsaboston.org)> for more information.

**Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors** – The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of introductory one-on-one guided tours to the Museum and its collections for blind and low vision individuals who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am and the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Individuals can attend one or more sessions, whichever interests them. Guided tours can also be scheduled at other times. Pre-registration is not required unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. Contact Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 or <[vburrows@mfa.org](mailto:vburrows@mfa.org)> to register. Call 617-369-3189 or email <[access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.org)> or go to <[www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, and is accessible by the Green line “E” train to the “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop.

**Free introductory tour of MFA in sign language & with assistive listening devices** – A new monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. These tours will be given at 6:30 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 voice, 617-267-9703 TTY or email <[access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.org)>.

**Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum** – Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Autism Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101,

Watertown, MA. Hosted by Jamie Freed; a \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617-393-3824, x310 or <Jamie.Freed@aane.org>.

**Rainbow Support Group for Adults with Developmental Disabilities** – Funded by Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong and the Department of Developmental Services, and hosted by Cambridge Family & Children's Service (CFCS), this group provides an opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals with developmental challenges to find their voice, be heard and supported in a safe, friendly environment. Participants must be at least 22 years old. Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 4:30 to 6:00pm at CFCS, 60 Gore Street, Cambridge, which is accessible by taking the MBTA Green Line to the Lechmere station. For more information, contact Leah Meiselbach at <lmeiselbach@helpfamilies.org> or 617-876-4210, x133.

**Senior Support Group for Caregivers over 60** – meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy SantaMaria at 781-942-4888, x4022 or <familysupport@theemarc.org>.

#### Thursdays

**Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, unless a holiday, of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.

**DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group** – meets at Mass. General Hospital every Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m. in the Schiff Conference Center Room, Suite 4A on the 4th floor in the Yawkey Building. Follow the signs. Meetings are free and open to public. For more information call 617-855-2795 or email <mghgroup@dbsaboston.org>.

**“Piecing the Puzzle,” a Parent to Parent Autism Support Group** – meets in Jefferson Park Community Room #1, at Jackson Place in Cambridge every Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon. The purpose of this group is to provide support and understanding to families with children on the autism spectrum and to increase autism awareness in the community. Sponsored by Cambridge Family & Children's Services in collaboration with the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). For more information or to become a member, contact Yevett Fraticelli at <piecing\_the\_puzzle@yahoogroups.com> or 617-876-4210, x105.

#### Saturdays

**Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group (BABIS)** – The mission of this free support group is to provide a positive forum for peer socialization, hope and education for people with acquired brain injury, their family and friends. This group is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the from 10am-12pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, conference rooms 8A & AB, 125 Nashua Street, Boston. No registration required, just show up! For more information, call Sally Johnson at 617-573-2539, email <babisgroup@hotmail.com>, or see <www.babis.info>.

#### Sundays

**Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors** –These tours are given on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is not required for the Sunday tours unless a sighted guide or other access accommodation. See Wednesday listing for details.

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## Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

**Access Notice:** The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

### Cambridge City Council

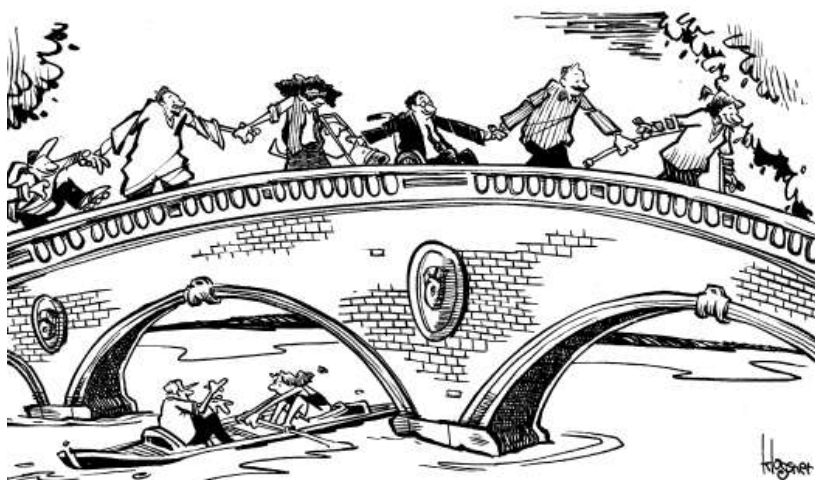
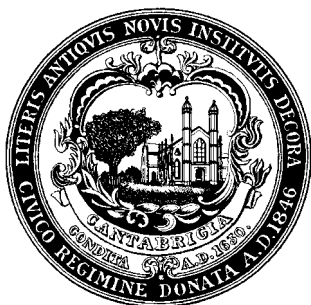
David P. Maher, *Mayor*  
Henrietta Davis, *Vice-Mayor*  
Leland Cheung  
Marjorie C. Decker  
Craig A. Kelley  
Kenneth E. Reeves  
Sam Seidel  
E. Denise Simmons  
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.

### City Administration

Robert W. Healy, *City Manager*  
Richard C. Rossi, *Deputy City Manager*  
Ellen Semonoff, *Assistant City Manager, Human Service Programs*

### Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Michael Muehe, *Executive Director/ADA Coordinator*  
Kate Thurman, *Disability Project Coordinator*  
Rachel Tanenhaus, *Chair*  
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Eileen Keegan Bongiorno  
Laura Brelsford  
Elizabeth Dean-Clower  
Sandy Durmaskin  
JoAnn Haas  
Alissa Land  
Gordon Slater, *Youth Ambassador*  
Don Summerfield  
Kathy Watkins



**AccessLetter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,  
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51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

**Read past issues on our website: [www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm](http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm)**

If you would rather receive your copy of **AccessLetter** electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list, contact us at 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-492-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax, or [kthurman@cambridgema.gov](mailto:kthurman@cambridgema.gov)

**Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities**

51 Inman Street, second floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139